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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [ETTC](#) [ER](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: EASTERN SUDAN AGREEMENT: TWO DOWN, ONE TO GO

REF: A. A. STATE 164613

[1](#)B. B. ASMARA 787

Classified By: AMB Scott H. DeLisi, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Over the past week, the Eastern Front and Sudan's Government of National Unity (GNU) have agreed in principle to the wealth sharing and security arrangement components of an agreement on the future of eastern Sudan. The parties are finalizing power sharing arrangements, the final component of the agreement, and hope to have all three drafts initialed by the end of the week. Current plans call for signing the agreement in mid-October with the Eastern Front holding a conference to explain the agreement to its constituencies in Tesseney, Eritrea in early November. All parties seem happy with the agreement's draft elements thus far. While not meeting all of their initial goals, the Eastern Front members believe the agreement is a stepping stone towards strengthening the Eastern Front as a political party and achieving future development in eastern Sudan. Barring any surprises in the final version, Post believes the Department should support the agreement as a step towards stability in the region and should consider carefully providing funding for training and capacity-building programs. End Summary.

SECURITY ARRANGEMENT

[1](#)2. (C) On September 28, the Eastern Front and the Government of National Unity (GNU) initialed the agreement's security arrangement document. Dr. Amna Dirar, vice chairman of the Eastern Front, told Emboff that the Eastern Front was pleased with the outcome and provided details of the security arrangements. The document outlines the integration

of the majority of the Eastern Front troops - estimated at just over 5,000 - into the national army and police forces. It stipulates that there will be three main units in the east. Each of these units will draw at least 33 percent of its members from the Beja and Rashaida tribes. These individuals will be required to serve in units in eastern Sudan for a minimum of five years, after which, they may possibly be moved to other areas of the country.

13. (C) The Eastern Front believes that approximately one quarter of the Eastern Front troops will choose to be demobilized prior to integration. A program to reintegrate these individuals back into society is in the planning stages. Dirar believes the process for integration and demobilization will take six to eight months in total. She also explained that a side agreement was reached, not included in the security arrangement document, which would provide the Eastern Front with 250 seats in the military and police academies in Khartoum over the next three years.

#### WEALTH SHARING

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14. (C) The draft for the wealth sharing agreement was finalized and initialed on October 1. Many of the details of the agreement were made available in the Khartoum daily, al-Sahafa. (Note: Article was sent to AF/SPG and Embassy Khartoum. End Note.) The wealth sharing draft appears to focus solely on the development fund, excluding initial Eastern Front requests for percentages of revenues.

15. (C) Dr. Taisir Ali of the Peacebuilding Center in the Horn of Africa (PCHA) told Emboff that the GNU, under the terms of the draft agreement, will provide 600 million USD into the Development Fund for Eastern Sudan over the next five years. This amount falls significantly below the Eastern Front's request for 1 billion USD, but above the GNU's initial offer of 300 million USD spread over seven years. The draft agreement states that Federal Minister of Finance Al-Zubeir Ahmed al-Hassan will administer the fund, with oversight by a committee responsible for approving expenditures and programs. The nine-person committee will include: three individuals appointed by the Eastern Front, the three governors (Walis) of eastern Sudan, and three individuals from eastern Sudan appointed by President Bashir. The day-to-day running of the fund will be handled by an expert economist from eastern Sudan, although no specifics were given on who this individual will be.

16. (C) The arrangement does not include any of the Eastern Front's initial demands for a percentage of revenues from the gold mines, oil or Port Sudan income. Taisir pointed out that while the wealth sharing agreement failed to address the issue of revenue sharing, there was a memorandum of understanding on affirmative action regarding industries in eastern Sudan witnessed by the mediator. He said that the GNU also committed to providing employment opportunities for all national projects in eastern Sudan, specifically in the gold mines, oil industry and Port Sudan; however, no specifics on numbers are included in the draft memorandum of understanding.

#### OUTSTANDING ISSUES ON POWER SHARING

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17. (C) Since the outset of negotiations, the issue of creating one region from the three states of eastern Sudan has been the biggest obstacle to an agreement. All along, the GNU has clearly indicated that it was unlikely to concede to such a demand. The Eastern Front has offered two compromise proposals to the GNU. Dirar told Emboff that both the Eastern Front

and GNU had agreed in principle to create a coordinating body for eastern Sudan, which would link the three states together. The coordinating body would include the governors (Walis) from each state and would be headed up by an additional, currently unidentified individual.

¶18. (C) The second proposal is for the GNU to hold a national conference on the issue of regionalism in Sudan in the next year. The conference would discuss returning to a model from Sudan's past, which would create, among other things, distinct regions in the east and Darfur and a more decentralized national government. A national referendum on the issue would be held before the next election. (Comment: This approach could, according to some observers including Taisir, backfire on the Eastern Front and Darfurians, as the NCP holds a majority in many regions outside of southern Sudan. End Comment.)

¶19. (C) On political representation, Dirar said the Eastern Front and GNU have agreed in principle to one central minister, one state minister, five MPs in the GNU and 10 MPs in each of the regional governments. The parties are still discussing whether the Eastern Front will be given an assistant or advisor position to the president similar to the one created for Darfur.

#### NEXT STEPS

¶10. (C) The eastern Sudan negotiations are expected to conclude with the initialing of a final draft on power sharing by the end of this week. Post has heard that President Bashir will travel to Asmara to sign the agreement; the timing of the signing will depend on his schedule but is expected to occur within the upcoming week. The Eastern Front is already discussing a conference to be held in early November in Tesseney, Eritrea, to legitimize the process and work on completing the structures of the Eastern Front before heading to Khartoum and back to the field to garner support for the agreement.

#### EASTERN FRONT INTERNAL DYNAMICS

¶11. (C) Post notes that the lack of cohesion within the Eastern Front over the last year has arisen primarily as the result of a personality clash between Musa Muhammed Ahmed, Chairman of the Eastern Front and Dr. Amna Dirar, and not due to inter-clan divisions between the Rashiada and Beja. In fact, both Musa and Amna are members of the Beja tribe, although from different sub-clans. Their disagreements stem more from differences in backgrounds, experience and world views than from tribal or clan allegiances.

¶12. (C) While nuances of clan affiliations and tensions need to be taken into account during the implementation phase, most of post's Sudan contacts believe an agreement will help to unify the Eastern Front as an organization. As for the current Eastern Front team, Musa Muhammed Ahmed, Abdallah Kuna and Ali Safi have all been given general officer postings in the army. The agreement stipulates that any individual holding a post in the army cannot hold a post in the political party. As a result, their future move to the army will mean that the current divisions are unlikely to factor as prominently in future Eastern Front party politics.

#### INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION AND SUPPORT

¶13. (C) The international community has been meeting

regularly to discuss the agreement and the challenges facing the Eastern Front. While no one believes the agreement is perfect or without flaw, the diplomatic community does believe the agreement is a step in the right direction and should be supported. Post is focusing with our EU colleagues on ways to enhance the capabilities of the Eastern Front as a political party, ways to educate the populations of Eastern Sudan on the agreement and the need for greater involvement of the Eastern population in future elections.

¶14. (C) The Eastern Front has asked for the international community to witness the agreement and for specific assistance on oversight and implementation of the development fund as well as assistance in sponsoring the upcoming conference in Tesseney. Most observers in the diplomatic community have expressed hesitation toward witnessing an agreement which they have not helped create, but all agree on the need to support the agreement and its future implementation.

CONCLUSION

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¶15. (C) Post agrees with the international community that the agreement, while not perfect, is a step in the right direction. While the Eastern Front has not been able to achieve all the goals that were set forth at the outset, they can build on this agreement. Achieving their goals in the future will require the international community's assistance. Post shares the general reluctance to formally witnessing the agreement and notes that we have not, in any event, been requested to do so formally by the mediator. Nor is it clear that the GNU would agree to international signatories to this agreement in any capacity. We urge, however, that the Department consider supporting the agreement and its implementation through capacity building assistance for the Eastern Front among other options.

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